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# Nature, Rationale, and Effectiveness of Education for Coexistence

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*Coexistence is a state of mind shared by society members who recognize the rights of another group to exist peacefully as a legitimate, equal partner with whom disagreements have to be resolved in nonviolent ways. Achieving coexistence is a great challenge because of the negative relations between the two groups. These negative relations, the result of ethnocentric beliefs or intractable conflict, are widely shared and their abolition requires deep societal change. Education for coexistence plays an important function in this change. The article suggests that when negative relations are based on ethnocentrism, education for coexistence plays a major role in changing the nature of the relations. But when negative relations derive from intergroup conflict, education for coexistence has less influence.*

Within the realm of intergroup relations, different concepts were offered to describe positively valued relations between groups. Among them are concepts like tolerance, multiculturalism, peace, reconciliation, and coexistence. In essence, they have been mostly used for describing desired states to which societies, nations, or states should aspire. The underlying assumption in developing these concepts has been that the system of intergroup relations currently prevailing in many countries is far from being satisfactory and there is a need to change them completely, or at least to improve them. Therefore, the term education has often been attached to these concepts (i.e., peace education, education for multiculturalism or education for coexistence) to describe active attempts to educate people to value and aspire to these states as well as to learn to live accordingly by acquiring corresponding

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beliefs, attitudes, and behavioral patterns (e.g., Banks, 1995; Merryfield & Remy, 1995; Reardon, 1988; Vogt, 1997).

In the following description of negative intergroup relations, which will serve as a point of departure for the discussion of positive intergroup concepts, I would like to divide the origins of these negative relations to two categories: ethnocentric and conflict origins (see Bar-Tal, 1990). These origins are not mutually exclusive and often they are complementary. The ethnocentric origin is based on a group's central beliefs in its own superiority, which provide epistemic basis to ethnocentrism. In other words, although ethnocentrism was proposed to be universal (LeVine & Campbell, 1972; Sumner, 1906), it plays a major role in intergroup relations when society members hold central beliefs about possessing race, characteristics, traits, religion, heritage, or culture that make them superior to another group(s), and the other group(s) is (are) inferior in one or some of the noted features. These central beliefs are often embedded in ideologies of different kinds. For example, sometimes they are part of a racist ideology, as it was the case in Nazi Germany; sometimes they are part of a political-economic ideology, as was the case of Soviet and U.S. relations; sometimes they are based on religious beliefs, as in the case of Hindu-Muslim relations in India; or sometimes they are based on national ideology, as in the case of Russian-Estonian relations in Estonia. Furthermore, these central ethnocentric beliefs not only underlie attitudes of prejudice, they also often lead to behaviors of exploitation, discrimination, and mass killings and even to ethnic cleansing and genocide (Staub & Bar-Tal, 2003).

Negative relations can, also, evolve as a result of intergroup conflict. Conflict erupts as a result of contradictory goals and interests between groups over territory, resources, economy, religion, values, and so forth (see Bar-Tal, Kruglanski, & Klar, 1989; Kriesberg, 1982; Mitchell, 1981; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994). Obviously, conflict is an inseparable part of intergroup relations, and it erupts continuously in every intergroup relationship. Not all conflict relations are intensive and prolonged. Many are temporary, touch on unimportant issues, and are solved with institutionalized means. Those are tractable conflicts. But on the other side of the dimension are intractable conflicts that go on for many years, are intense and violent, and thus necessarily lead to deep animosity between groups or societies (Bar-Tal, 1998; Kriesberg, 1998a). An example of this kind of conflict is the Israeli-Arab conflict, which has lasted many decades, and which is violent with a high degree of involvement by society members. Coexistence within the framework of this conflict will be discussed later.

A state of negative intergroup relations may be accepted by society members as a normative state or be perceived as required by the particular existing conditions. In such cases, there is usually little public discussion about the necessity to change the negative relations. Debate appears only when at least some society members begin to consider the present intergroup relations unsatisfactory and start to develop ideas that suggest changes to the negative intergroup relations. The evolvement of

such line of ideas is an intellectual, cultural, social, and political endeavor (e.g., Galtung, 1978; Kymlicka, 1995; Lederach, 1997; Mclosky & Brill, 1983; Sullivan, Piereson, & Marcus, 1982; Weiner, 1998a).

But although these ideas imply a shared human aspiration for harmonious intergroup relations, they differ in the nature of the relations that they envisage. One difference pertains to the level of harmony between groups that they imply. This difference can be described on the dimension of positive quality of relations. On the one extreme of the dimension we can locate relations of complete harmony. An example of full harmony is a stable and lasting peace characterized by mutual recognition and acceptance; interests and goals invested in developing peaceful relations; fully normalized-cooperative political, economic, and cultural relations based on equality and justice, nonviolence, mutual trust, and positive attitudes; and sensitivity to and consideration of the other party's needs and interests (Kacowicz & Bar-Siman-Tov, 2000; Lederach, 1997). Furthermore, along the dimension are minimal positive intergroup relations such as coexistence (e.g., Weiner, 1998a) or a situation of resolved conflict (Kriesberg, Northrup, & Thorson, 1989; Rasmussen, 1997).

Another difference, in my opinion, among various approaches to positive intergroup relations refers to the context in which the relations occur. The approaches usually relate to two different situations. In one situation the different groups are supposed to be a part of one political entity (i.e., state) as in the case of the conflict in South Africa or that of the discrimination of the African Americans in the United States. In the other situation, the two groups live or are supposed to live in two different political entities as in the case of the conflict between Pakistan and India or between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. In my opinion, this distinction is important to decide on the type of processes required for changing the intergroup relations and the nature of the desired outcome. In general, groups that will be living together as one society need to construct mechanisms that foster equal integration. In the other situation, the rivaling societies will need to construct mechanisms of intergroup relations in two different systems that involve different processes and outcomes. In both cases, however, the groups have to go through a similar psychological change to form new goals, motivations, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors in order to change the nature of negative intergroup relations. In few cases the situation is more complicated when the two contexts are interdependent. This is the case of relations between Jews and Palestinians because a small part of the Palestinian nation lives in the state of Israel as its citizens and who should have full rights, but yet struggle to achieve in it full equality, and part of this nation (those who live in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem) strives to live in an independent Palestinian state established in these territories (Khalidi, 1997; Rouhana, 1997).

The present article focuses on coexistence and, in fact, on education for coexistence. Coexistence belongs to the category of minimal positive intergroup relations

(see Weiner, 1998b) and applies mainly to a situation of relations between two societies living in two different states following an intractable conflict. In this case it constitutes a major achievement after the two societies engaged for years in violent confrontations. But, it may be applied, also, to intergroup relations within one political system following exploitation and discrimination. Nevertheless, the latter type of coexistence is less desirable, since it may be viewed as having the purpose of eternalizing relations of inequality and discrimination in the framework of coexisting relations.

This article has several parts. The first part will elaborate on the nature of coexistence. Then, the second part will present the rationale of establishing coexistence, delineating its importance. This part will be followed by description of education for coexistence and the last part will discuss its effectiveness. At the end, a number of conclusions will be presented.

## Nature of Coexistence

Coexistence is not a very popular concept among social and educational scientists in the world and, therefore, is seldom used in comparison to other concepts describing positive intergroup relations (Weiner, 1998b). One reason for this is the vagueness and indistinctiveness of the concept and another is that it pertains only to minimal positive intergroup relations. Indeed it refers to a low level of positive intergroup relations, and according to Kriesberg (1998b), it is an open concept that "leaves a great deal of room for various forms of relations" (p.183). But the present article argues that, in spite of these limitations, coexistence should be seen as an important concept in the lexicon of intergroup relations, indicating significant progress in comparison to past negative relations.

Coexistence, in my view, refers to the conditions that serve as the fundamental prerequisites for the evolvement of advanced harmonious intergroup relations. It refers to the very recognition in the right of the other group to exist peacefully with its differences and to the acceptance of the other group as a legitimate and an equal partner with whom disagreements have to be resolved in nonviolent ways. I would argue that the following are the main components of coexistence:

### *Nonviolence*

Coexistence implies that although conflict and disagreement may still be intact, the involved groups have decided to abandon violent ways of confrontation and choose peaceful means to achieve their goals. It means that the groups are ready to establish mechanisms of negotiation to deal with the list of contentions in order to resolve them.

*Recognition in the Legitimate Existence of the Other Group*

Coexistence means recognition in the existence of the other group with its differences, which may be in the realm of goals, values, ideology, religion, race, nationality, ethnicity, culture, and other domains. This recognition implies that the groups have the same right to exist and live in peace and acknowledges the legitimacy of the differences between them. Moreover, there is also recognition in the legitimacy of the groups to raise contentions and grievances that are then resolved in nonviolent ways. Each group is ready to deal with them as causes to the deterioration of their intergroup relations.

*Personalization*

Coexistence implies personalization of the members of the other group-that is, viewing them as humane individuals with legitimate needs, aspirations, and goals.

*Equal Partnership*

Coexistence requires recognition in the principle of equal status and treatment of the other group(s), without superiority. This principle applies to negotiations as well as to other types of contacts.

I would like to suggest that these elementary conditions are essential for starting new kinds of intergroup relations on the way to full reconciliation. But, the proposed conception includes one additional fundamental component. Coexistence does not involve only acts that are implied by the described requirements. Acts such as an agreement on ceasefire, beginning of negotiation, conflict resolution, or changes of laws are important parts of coexistence. But the core of coexistence refers to a state of mind shared by the members of the society. In this sense coexistence is primarily a formative process of the psychological repertoire of society members. The accompanying acts of cooperation, integration, or exchanges are direct behavioral derivations of the coexistence. Sole acts which come as a result of orders or laws, without psychological change by the society members, do not indicate the state of coexistence.

The above described conditions of coexistence are limited. They do not include change of power relations, development of sensitivity to the other group's needs, establishment of full economic or cultural cooperation, compensation for past sufferings and harm, forgiveness or healing, change of past narratives, and other important elements of harmonious relations (see Ackermann, 1994; Hayner, 1999; Lederach, 1998; Lipschutz, 1998; Staub, 2000; Wilmer, 1998). These elements may evolve within the framework of coexistence, but they are neither requirements nor necessary conditions for this type of intergroup relations. In spite

of the minimal requirements for coexistence, it is an important phase after years of conflict, exploitation, and discrimination during which intergroup relations come to be dominated by hostility, mistrust, delegitimization, prejudice, fear, anger, and hatred.

## Rationale of Coexistence

Coexistence should be seen as a first, crucial step and a necessary condition for the continuation of the process of improving intergroup relations. Only after cementing this primary phase of coexistence is it possible to move gradually to further steps of constructing more harmonious and peaceful intergroup relations and of even achieving reconciliation (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004; Rothstein, 1999; Whittaker, 1999).

In order to gauge the progress constituted by coexistence, we have to recognize the extent and the depth of negative intergroup relations that previously prevailed. In the case of intractable conflicts, which are over essential and existentially contradictory goals, confrontations are violent; they are perceived as irreconcilable and have a zero-sum character without a possibility of negotiation and often even without recognition and contact (Azar, 1990; Bar-Tal, 1998; Goertz & Diehl, 1993; Kriesberg, 1998a). In these long-standing conflicts, as in Northern Ireland or in the Middle East, psychological dynamics play an essential role. Intractable conflict deeply involves society members who develop a psychological repertoire of beliefs, attitudes, and emotions about their goals, about causes of the conflict outbreak and its course, about the rival, and about the desired solution. Of special importance in this repertoire are widely shared beliefs (called *societal beliefs*)[1] which sometimes are central and become part of a *societal ethos* (Bar-Tal, 2000a). Of focal consequence are those societal beliefs that justify the continuation of the conflict, delegitimize the opponent, and establish a positive self-image (see Bar-Tal, 1998; Oren, Bar-Tal, & David, 2004). The first set of beliefs outlines and rationalizes the goals that led to the conflict and justifies them in terms of their crucial importance. The second set devaluates the opponent by means of delegitimizing terms, presents the opponent as responsible for the outbreak of the conflict and its continuation, and focuses on the opponent's violent acts. The third set of societal beliefs portrays the own group as a victim of the enemy and constructs a positive self-image with characteristics referring to morality, humanity,

[1] *Societal beliefs* are defined as the society's members shared cognitions on topics and issues that are of special concern to society and contribute to its unique characteristics. They are organized around themes and consist of such contents as collective memories, ideologies, goals, myths, etc. *Ethos* combines central societal beliefs into a particular configuration and gives meaning to societal identity. During intractable conflict, the involved societies tend to form conflictive ethos combined of eight themes: societal beliefs about justness of one's own goals, security, positive self image, one's own victimization, delegitimization of the opponent, patriotism, unity and peace (Bar-Tal, 2000a).

courage, and bravery to differentiate between ingroup and the rival group. These societal beliefs are supported by collective memory and are grounded in collective emotional orientation (e.g., fear, anger, and hatred). They often become part of a societal ethos of conflict and, thus, are widely disseminated among society members, institutionalized, and transmitted to new generations. Eventually, this repertoire becomes an investment in the conflict and it fuels its continuation. It is rigid and resistant to change and thus inhibits de-escalation of the conflict, or even the modest achievement of coexistence.

Similarly, in the case of institutionalized discrimination and exploitation, the negative relations have, also, very deep psychological basis. The discriminating and exploiting group develops beliefs, attitudes, and emotions that place the discriminated and exploited group in inferior status, delegitimize it, and provide justification for ongoing discrimination and exploitation. This repertoire serves as an epistemic basis for the negative intergroup relations. It is widely shared and supported by norms and sometimes even by laws, as in the case of Nazi Germany or South Africa during the apartheid (e.g., Gordon, 1984; Lever, 1978; Mosse, 1964).

It is thus important to realize that the process of establishing coexistence begins at the lowest point of the negative intergroup relations (Bar-Tal, 2000b). This is the point when the negative intergroup relations are supported by a widely shared psychological repertoire. The negative relations have a cultural basis and, in many cases, are also supported by society's institutions, including political and economic institutions and, in few cases, the judiciary ones. The negative relations are further based on social norms, which are reflected in the behaviors of society members (e.g., violence against the outgroup or its exploitation or discrimination) in various domains of life. Finally, the negative relations find expression in cultural products, such as books, plays, or films. These negative relations continue through the years, often for decades and even centuries, in the absence of legitimization, personalization, recognition, negotiation, and sometimes even contact (Bar-Tal, 1998).

For example, at the peak of the Arab-Israeli conflict, with its focus on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, after the establishment of the state of Israel, neither the Israeli Jews nor the Palestinians recognized the other's national self-determination. The majority of Israelis, including most of its leaders, did not recognize the existence of a Palestinian nation and for many decades absolutely rejected the existence of the national movement in the form of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). On the other side, the Palestinians wrote and adopted the Palestinian National Covenant which negated the existence of the state of Israel and called for its destruction. For many years, there were no formal meetings between the Palestinian leaders of the PLO and their Israeli counterparts. During the 1960s and 1970s Palestinians refused meetings with Israelis, and later the state of Israel passed laws forbidding talks with the PLO and meetings between Israelis and any person associated with the PLO in any capacity. Both sides continuously engaged in violence.

While the Palestinians initiated acts of terror against Israeli targets, including civilian ones, Israelis conducted military activities against Palestinian organizations, expropriated land in the West Bank and Gaza strip to build Jewish settlements, tried to suppress any opposition to the Israeli occupation, and through military occupation controlled every aspect of Palestinian life (e.g., see the historical account by Smith, 1992; Tessler, 1994).

Inside the borders of Israel, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has affected the treatment of Palestinian citizens (called often Israeli Arabs), who have been viewed as a threatening minority. This perception, accompanied, also, by ethnocentric beliefs, led to prejudice and negative stereotyping of the Palestinians in Israel, including their delegitimization (Bar-Tal & Teichman, in press). On a behavioral level, since the establishment of Israel in 1948, Palestinian citizens of the state have been subjected to continuous institutionalized discrimination and harassment. During the first eighteen years after 1948 (until 1966), they were put under a military government that greatly controlled their life and limited their freedom. During the first decades, the government expropriated Palestinian land for Jewish settlements and transferred populations from one location to another. Also, throughout the years, the government has limited the expansion and development of the Palestinian villages and towns within Israel. In addition, civil inequality exists in every sphere of life, as subsequent governments have practiced discriminatory policies that allot lower budgets to the Palestinian sector than to the Jewish population, limit the scope of employment, and reduce the level of provided services (see Al-Haj & Rosenfeld, 1990; Kretzmer, 1990; Lustick, 1980; Rouhana, 1997; Smooha, 1989, 1992).

The presented description of intractable conflict shows what far reaching progress coexistence constitutes and what an enormous challenge it is to achieve it. Coexistence not only implies that leaders changed their minds about the goals of the conflict and about the rival, that there is contact between the rival sides, and that there is readiness to negotiate a new status of intergroup relations, but it indicates that large and influential segments of the society must also change their repertoire and support the new nature of the intergroup relations and that different groups, organizations, and institutions see the achievement of coexistence as an important societal objective. On the psychological-political level, coexistence signals that the rival can be trusted; that there is a partner for negotiation; that peace is possible; that violence can be stopped; that the rival is as humane as one's own group; and that instead of zero-sum confrontation, it is possible to develop conditions of mixed motive relations, in which both sides can gain and lose while cooperating. These psychological-political signals were transmitted in the détente that evolved in the relations between the Soviet Union and United States after a few decades of the Cold War that had all the characteristics of the intractable conflict. After years of confrontations that brought the world sometimes to the edge of direct war between the two superpowers, the two states decided to renounce war as a means

to settle their dispute, to reduce the arms race between them, to begin a series of negotiations as a way to solve different disagreements, and to begin cooperating in various spheres of life. This competitive, but peaceful, coexistence represented the lowest common denominator possible between two distrustful nuclear rivals that brought a new positive climate and, as result, changed the world (see Bowker & Williams, 1988; Sheldon, 1978; Urban, 1976).

Achievement of coexistence is not an obvious or required step. Groups may stay in conflict for decades and even centuries. They may discriminate and exploit for many years. And even when the ideas of coexistence appear, they are not automatically accepted. On the contrary, they are very often met with resistance and objection. Therefore, there is a need to use educational processes to propagate them. Society members have to support the efforts of realizing coexistence if it is to succeed. In this effort, education for coexistence plays an essential role. The coexistence processes have to be transmitted and disseminated to society members who must be exposed to them and be motivated to learn them. This is, on the one hand, a persuasive process and, on the other, a learning process because once society members are persuaded in the viability of coexistence ideas, they must then acquire them and internalize them. This is also major societal learning that requires a fundamental change of beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors.

## Education for Coexistence

Education for coexistence refers to the process through which society members are supposed to acquire the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are in line with the ideas of coexistence. This is usually a process of societal change because education for coexistence is typically launched when society members hold ideas that contradict the principles of coexistence. They hold a psychological repertoire that supports conflict, discrimination, or exploitation, and in order to move to coexistence, as a new state of intergroup relations, there is a need to change this repertoire also via education. In this context, I suggest to differentiate between two approaches to education for coexistence: a narrow approach (school approach) and a broad approach (societal approach). First, I shall describe the school approach.

### *School Approach*

The school approach focuses on education for coexistence within the school system. It views the school system as a major agent of socialization (Dreeben, 1968; Himmelweit & Swift, 1969) and concentrates on its use to change the nature of intergroup relations within society (see Bar-Tal, 2002a). It recognizes the limitations of persuading the whole society of the importance of coexistence ideas and, therefore, focuses on one agent, assuming that it has the greatest power of influence. This assumption is based on few reasons. First, education in schools is sure

to reach a whole segment of a society (i.e., the young generation) since schools are compulsory and all children and adolescents are required to attend them. Second, the young generation, which still is in the process of acquiring a psychological repertoire, is least affected by the dominating ethos and is more open to new ideas and information. Third, in comparison to other socialization agents, the society has maximum control over the messages transmitted in schools. Educational authorities such as the Ministry of Education or the Board of Education can decide on curricula, educational programs, and school textbooks. Fourth, the young generation is required to learn the messages and information transmitted in schools, and, therefore, it is possible to assure that students at least will be exposed to them.

It is recognized that individual school principles may initiate projects of education for coexistence that reflect their own values, convictions, and attitudes. Such initiative may take place even at the height of the conflict or institutionalized discrimination. But those are limited and sporadic initiatives that reach a small number of pupils and, therefore, have little social influence. In contrast, the systematic school approach refers to the planned and implemented policy of central educational authorities to institute education for coexistence as a mandatory program that reaches out to all school-age children and adolescents. Thus, education for coexistence in this form is intentional, planned, controlled, mandatory, and inclusive.

The objectives of education for coexistence are to form values, motivations, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and behavior patterns among children and adolescents that are conducive to coexistence. This repertoire comes to support coexistence as the new form of intergroup relations and prepares the young generation to live in these relations. On a practical level, education for coexistence requires transmission of knowledge, creation of experiences, and development of skills which can help to develop the psychological repertoire that accepts, recognizes, respects, legitimizes, humanizes, and personalizes the rival or discriminated group. To achieve this objective, the educational system needs to make major preparations. It is not enough only to declare the new educational policy which supports coexistence, but it is necessary to take active steps to implement it. Curricula must be developed, textbooks written, teachers trained, experiential programs constructed, proper learning climates created, and so on.

An example of education for coexistence in this narrow sense is Israel's Ministry of Education attempt in the 1980s to change the nature of relations between Israeli Jews and Arabs in the state of Israel. It all began with a committee set by the Ministry of Education to examine the relations between Jews and Arabs as an educational issue. In 1983, the committee submitted a report to the Director General of the Ministry of Education, who eventually published in early 1984 a document (i.e., circular of director general), outlining the principles of the new educational policy for coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Israel (Hareven, 1993).

The document referred "to relations between Jews and Arabs inside Israel as an issue of civil equality and way of life in a multicultural country and relations of

Israel and its Arab neighbors as an issue of relations between nations" (Hochman, 1986, p. 3). The policy was designed to develop a new type of cultural contact between Arabs and Jews—a contact on the basis of equality and cultural respect. It focused in particular on Jewish-Arab relations within the state of Israel, but it tried, also, to change the views of Arabs in general. In order to achieve these objectives, students in Israel's educational system were supposed to enrich their knowledge about Arab nations (i.e., their culture, religion, language, and literature), to extend their learning of the Arab language, to develop new attitudes of openness and readiness to get acquainted with Arab people and Arab culture, and to respect Arabs as human beings. In addition the program was supposed to develop skills of tolerance and of the ability to listen and understand the other, and treat him or her as an individual without using stereotypes (Hochman, 1986).

Minister of Education Yitzhak Navon, on entering the office at the end of 1984, embraced the new policy and gave orders to implement it. The Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation was asked to lead the implementation of the policy, which was based on a few of the following principles: It intended to reach all students enrolled in the educational system from kindergartens to high schools, it was supposed to be integrated in as many subject matters as possible, it intended to examine all the school textbooks to eliminate expressions of hatred and negative stereotyping of Arabs, and it was supposed to lead to the development of new educational programs (Hochman, 1986).

Through the mid-1980s several important positive steps were carried out. First, few new textbooks that focused on the coexistence between Jews and Arabs were written for different grades. Second, wide scale, in-service trainings were organized to involve teachers and train them in education for coexistence. Third, an attempt was made to extend Arabic language instruction in Jewish schools. Fourth, a program of encounters between Jewish and Arab students of all ages was initiated. Fifth, new educational programs to advance the coexistence between Jews and Arabs were written and were implemented in the schools. Sixth, different Non Government Organizations (NGO), whose aim was to advance the principles of the education for coexistence, were allowed to run their educational programs in the school system. In addition, the Ministry of Education declared Coexistence between Jews and Arabs as a national theme for all the schools in the years 1985–1986, and, in 1986, a new Unit for Education for Democracy and Coexistence was established in the Ministry, whose aim was to implement the policy (see Bard, 1998).

But with the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising (Intifada) at the end of 1987, which brought violent confrontation between Israelis and Palestinians in the occupied territories, the efforts began to fade and eventually slowly disappeared from the agenda of the Ministry of Education. When, in 1990, a new Minister of Education entered the office, he had new policies, which emphasized mostly Zionist and Jewish values.

*Societal Approach*

In my view, the societal approach of education for coexistence does not limit itself to the school system, but envisages changing the psychological repertoire of society at large. The assumption is that there is a need for political, social, and cultural change in the whole of society. Schools can play an important role in bringing about such change, but they constitute only one agent, and a major societal change requires the participation of political, societal, and cultural institutions; mass communication; leadership; and elites. In this view, schools cannot act separately but should be part of a general societal campaign, since the young generation is part of the society and the messages transmitted by schools should not differ from those transmitted by other channels and institutions. The societal approach suggests that schools do not exist in a vacuum, but are an integral part of society, so that education for coexistence cannot succeed if it is not activated on a broad societal scale.

I would like to propose that education for coexistence in its broad, societal sense has the following features: (a) It consists of formal and planned processes (for example, in schools) as well as of informal processes (for example, via mass media); (b) it involves participation of the society's political, social, cultural, religious, and educational leaders on the national and community levels to disseminate the ideas of coexistence; (c) it takes place in all the institutions of the society—political, social, cultural, educational, economic, and religious—such as schools, religious centers, or the army; (d) it has to be reflected in all the societal channels of communication from advertising or films to TV programs and school textbooks; (e) it requires the creation of supportive, new norms that will be informally enforced via social sanctions; and (7) it requires the support of legislation against racism, discrimination, and exploitation in order to enforce new values of coexistence.

It is important to note that education for coexistence in the societal approach has difficulty to define unitary objectives and policies for the society and then implement them because in democratic states there is no centralized control over groups, organizations, institutions, and channels of communication. They are free to formulate their own ideas and express them. Policies of education for the entire society can be carried out only in authoritarian and totalitarian political regimes. In democratic societies, the societal campaign of education for coexistence depends on the voluntary and free campaign of the societal institutions and channels of communication, which may decide that the principles of coexistence, should reflect important values for the society and, therefore, should be disseminated in the society.

An example of education for coexistence on the societal scale is Israel's effort to change Israeli Jews' psychological repertoire towards the Palestinian people and its legitimate representatives following the 1993 Oslo agreement. When the Israeli

government, led by the Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, recognized the Palestinian Liberation Organization as the representative of the Palestinian people and signed the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles, there was a need to convince many Israelis to adopt beliefs of coexistence towards the Palestinians. At least during the first years of Rabin's government, a societal campaign was orchestrated, in view of the intense opposition to the Oslo agreement in the Israeli society. During the years 1994–1995, the educational system ran programs to promote peaceful ideas and it declared peace as a unifying national theme for the school year of 1994–1995. The law forbidding contact with PLO representatives was repealed and contacts between Israeli Jews and Palestinians increased dramatically. Governmental representatives began continuous meetings and negotiations with the leaders of the PLO. During these years leaders of the PLO were allowed to be interviewed on Israeli TV, and TV programs presented the Palestinians in a human and personalized way. The press reported about the Palestinians in a more humane way. Also, during these years contacts between Israeli Jewish and Palestinian professional groups, as well as between NGOs on both sides, intensified. Various Israeli-Palestinian cooperative projects in different spheres of life were carried out. Governmental agencies began to distribute positive information about Israeli-Palestinian relations (see Beilin, 1997; Savir, 1998). Israeli films, theatrical plays, and literature increasingly presented Palestinians as fellow human beings and at the same time acknowledged their discrimination and oppression—a trend that had begun already in the 1980s (Bar-Tal & Teichman, in press). This trend somewhat changed during the premiership of Benjamin Netanyahu, who had different views of the peace process with the Palestinians (i.e., less support for it), and it came to a complete halt in the fall of 2000 when the second Palestinian uprising began and the peace process collapsed.

At this point, it is important to note that education for coexistence following intractable conflict between two societies that live or will live in two separate political systems is more viable than education for coexistence that pertains to groups that are supposed to live in one system. The principles of coexistence are more appropriate to a situation characterized by two geo-politically separate groups since separate states can have normatively different types of acceptable relations that range from coexistence to stable peaceful relations. When the groups are supposed to live together in one political system—one state—the basic principles of coexistence do not guarantee the equality, freedom, and full political, social, and economic integration that are required for a democracy. Coexistence is only a first stage that necessarily has to be followed by more progressive steps of equal integration on the way to constructing a multicultural society. In fact, in many cases (e.g., in South Africa or Nicaragua), coexistence was not even formally set as a goal and the societies moved immediately towards full integration. In other cases, as in Israel or Northern Ireland, principles of coexistence have been used as an intermediate phase on the way to full integration. But the longer the phase of

coexistence lasts without further significant steps toward full, equal integration, the more coexistence is discredited. This is the case with Israel, where the Arab minority considers coexistence as a way to eternalize Jewish dominance and to continue discrimination against the Arab population (e.g., see Maoz, 2000).

In addition, it should be noted the campaign for coexistence never begins with a systematic societal-political-psychological process of education. It almost always begins with a small minority which is often stigmatized, marginalized, and sometimes even delegitimized by mainstream society, which perceives the campaign as endangering unity and solidarity and hampers the coping effort to withstand the pressure of the other groups. Only with time may this minority be enlarged to establish a more solid societal basis. Obviously, different segments of the society, different institutions, channels, or individuals can educate for coexistence in every stage of the process, but the two described large-scale types of education for coexistence can begin formally only when the time is ripe. Without this ripeness, education for coexistence has a high risk of failure.

## Effectiveness of Education for Coexistence

One basic question concerns the effectiveness of the education for coexistence, and that is, can education for coexistence change the nature of intergroup relations? This is an important general question not only because of the conceptual implications but, first of all, for practical reasons. By posing the question, we assume that the intergroup relations require, at least, an improvement and, often, fundamental change.

In my opinion, the answer to this question depends on the foundations of the negative relations. When the negative relations are based on ethnocentrism of both groups or either of them, education for coexistence can play a major role in changing them. But when the negative relations are a consequence of intergroup conflict, education for coexistence has less influence. Specifically, in the case of ethnocentrism with its typical racism, discrimination, and exploitation, education for coexistence can have an effect because, in this case, it is mainly the beliefs, attitudes, and norms that need to be changed, which is the main objective of education for coexistence (see for example, Davidson & Davidson, 1994; Levin, 2002; Stephan & Stephan, 2001). In this case the success of education for coexistence depends mostly on the convictions and determination of the majority that practices the discrimination and exploitation. Well planned, systematic, consistent, and continuous education for coexistence implemented by political, societal, legal, educational and cultural institutions and channels of communication can make a significant change. A salient example of such change is the relations between Whites and Blacks in the United States that, although are still far from the desired nature, leave no doubt that the societal campaign has brought major change in the last sixty years.

In the context of intractable conflict, the situation is completely different. In this case change of the beliefs, attitudes, emotions, and behaviors of the involved groups are, first of all, dependent on the nature of the conflict and its severity (Bar-Tal & Teichman, in press). That is, the political process of conflict resolution and the accompanied military, political, societal, and economic events and processes have a determinative influence on the nature of the intergroup relations. Therefore, change of the psychological repertoire is related to a conflict resolution process that includes negotiation, compromises, statements of the leaders, unilateral and bilateral acts of good will, events that accompany the peace process, and so forth (Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2004).

In this situation, education for coexistence can act only as a supportive catalyst that accelerates the process but cannot by itself play a major role. Education for coexistence initiated by one, or even both of the groups, without changes in the nature of the conflict, cannot be effective. The events of the conflict largely dictate the nature of intergroup relations. When the peace process is accompanied by violence and military confrontations, the rhetoric of conflict, and hostile acts, education for coexistence does not have the chance to succeed. These events validate the held ethos of conflict, including the collective memory that has been fueling the conflict through the years. These powerful factors influence the psyche of the group members maintaining fear, hatred, and animosity and at the same time jeopardizing any attempts to create a more positive climate for intergroup relations (see Bar-Tal, 2001, 2002b). The described case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the attempts to develop education of coexistence validate the above assumptions. Education for coexistence developed as long as the violence was kept to its minimum and the sides expressed readiness to build new relations. Once the violence erupted in 1987 and in 2000, education for coexistence collapsed.

In the situation of violent conflict, when the society's members perceive a threat to their personal and national security and are engulfed by fear, they tend to support military measures taken against the rival in order to contain its aggression (Bar-Tal, 2002b). It is almost impossible to develop education for coexistence with the rival under these conditions. In this case, there should be initiated attempts to develop two lines of education. One line should encourage critical thinking, in order to boost critical examination of the prevailing thoughts about the conflict management and to promote examination of alternatives to violence. The other line should encourage empathy to view the rival as humane and also as a victim of the violence. These two lines of education may eventually serve as a basis for the evolvement of education for coexistence when the violence diminishes and the leaders begin political negotiation to end the conflict peacefully.

When, however, the peacemaking process progresses more or less smoothly, which means that the positive events are salient and override dissatisfaction with the process, then education for coexistence may play an important role. It will serve to reinforce the peace climate, disseminate the beliefs that are supposed to

change the dominating ethos of conflict, and prepare the young generation for the new era of peace.

The analysis of education for coexistence has to take into account that the beliefs, attitudes, and emotions that maintain conflict, discrimination, and exploitation are not constitutional, but learned. There is, therefore, always hope that they can be substituted by another repertoire that is in line with the principles of coexistence. This repertoire can be learned when there is a willingness and readiness for change.

## Conclusion

The present analysis indicates that coexistence is an important phase in intergroup relations following long-term, intractable conflict and lasting discrimination and exploitation. This phase should be considered a major achievement and as an intermediate step on the way to more harmonious and positive relations. It is an inevitable phase in view of the very negative nature of intergroup relations which were characterized most saliently by the delegitimizing beliefs that the group(s) held about each other. Delegitimization led to depersonalization, lack of recognition, ignorance about the other group, and, often, to harmful acts and violence.

Coexistence was presented as a psychological state shared by society members. This is a key point that frames the concept within the societal-psychological framework. It indicates that society members share the psychological repertoire that feeds the negative relations, and, in order to change the nature of relations between the groups, there is a need to change this repertoire. Changing the repertoire that has fueled conflict, discrimination, and exploitation is a long process in which education for coexistence plays a role. It has a determinative role when the groups are ready and the conditions are facilitating. Facilitating conditions are of special importance when the relations are to be changed following intractable conflict. The political and military climate provides the background for coexistence education, and, only when they are in line with its objectives, are there good chances for success. Thus, education for coexistence in these cases should be seen as a catalyst that can accelerate change rather than instigate change.

Education for coexistence plays a major role in cases when the negative relations are mainly based and dependent on the beliefs and attitudes of the group(s) involved. In these cases, there is a need to launch consistent and continuous education for existence in order to change the psychological repertoire of the group members and establish new relations.

This article has tried to argue that coexistence and education for coexistence should gain more attention in the social sciences and education. The last decade has witnessed a growing interest in intergroup reconciliation after decades of focusing on peace and education for peace. No one will disagree that the achievement of peace, reconciliation, and equal integration are essential objectives for humankind.

But in reality these goals are very difficult to achieve, and, even when there is continuous progress towards them, it takes a very long time to reach them. Coexistence is an intermediate step that is easier to attain and is a necessary phase in reaching the final goals. Thus, there is a need to increase the effort to comprehend the nature of coexistence and education for coexistence and to develop ways to implement it in order to make the world a better place to live where intergroup relations are more harmonious, humane, and peaceful.

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